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THE CAMPAIGN IN WESTERN ASIA

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By asking the way, you can get to Baghdad.

—*Turkish Proverb.*

THE war, so far as the eastern theatre is concerned, is a war of spheres of influence—is more than anything else the war of the Persian Gulf and the Baghdad railroad. As such, Persia and Turkey themselves have very little to do with the matter. But if from a detached point of view it seems peculiarly unjust that these countries should be dragged into a dispute not of their making, it is, from the same detached point of view, impossible to forget that this region has from the beginning of recorded history been the battle-ground of spheres of influence. No other single region in the world has seen so many wars, has borne so much of invasion, siege, sack, and massacre. And there has always been the meeting point and clashing point of Europe and Asia.

I cannot now review the various claims of this ancient region to our interest, or even catalogue the successive tides of conquest, immigration, and commerce that have swept across it. I may, however, point out the accident of geography that put so many barriers of climate, sea, and mountain between East and West, leaving only two practicable gateways, one to the north and one to the south of the mountains of Kurdistan. Through these passes from time immemorial have streamed the caravans or armies of Asia to the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and the Mediterranean. A less practicable but by no means deserted gateway is the Persian Gulf. At its head port of Basra—the Balsora of Sindbad the Sailor—camel and galley early began to

exchange their burdens. More famous and more crowded was long the island port of Ormuz, lying in the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf off Bender Abbas, whither converged the sea routes of the East and caravan trails radiating into Persia, India, and remoter quarters of Asia. Marco Polo was one of several mediaeval Europeans to bring home stories of the wealth of that old trading centre.

In 1498 Vasco da Gama discovered a new road between Europe and Asia—and thereby precipitated the long chain of events that brought about the war between the Persian Gulf and the Baghdad railway. This new road also passed through Ormuz, in those days of small ships, and the countrymen of Vasco da Gama were not long in taking Ormuz for themselves. For the next hundred years the Persian Gulf, its commerce, and its pearls, were an appanage of Portugal. In the meantime, however, certain European neighbors of Portugal also found their way around the Cape of Good Hope. Among these were sailors and traders from the insignificant isle of England; and the first time they showed themselves in Ormuz, the Portuguese promptly clapped them into prison. Such were the amenities of foreign trade in the sixteenth century—though we must admit that the tradition of the *manière forte* has not yet quite surrendered to the policy of the open door.

While the affair of Ormuz was the beginning of England's relation with the Persian Gulf, Englishmen were already known in Persia itself. As early as the time of Edward the First (1239-1307), the first British ambassador went to Persia. Later the redoubtable Timur wrote to Henry the Fourth with regard to an exchange of commerce, and Henry the Fourth replied, incidentally complimenting the redoubtable Timur on his victories over the Turks. It was, however, under Elizabeth and the enlightened Safevi Shahs that Anglo-Persian relations became continuous and Englishmen gained a paramount position among foreigners in Persia.

Two of the famous gentleman-adventurers were the brothers Sir Anthony and Sir Robert Sherley, who went out to Persia in 1598, took service under Shah Abbas the Great, and first re-organized an Asiatic army on European lines. The next year the first East India Company was formed. Out of that hazard of merchants, and out of its rivalries with similar companies from other countries, grew the British Empire in India. And the position of the English in Persia was then, as it is now, a corollary of their position in India. In 1614 the East India Company, discovering that India was not the best market for broadcloth, turned its attention to Persia. At the same time Shah Abbas, thanks to his new Sherley army, succeeded in dislodging the Portuguese from the caravan station of Gombrun, opposite Ormuz—which thereafter changed its name to Bender Abbas. Without ships, however, he could not reach Ormuz itself. For the Persians, being highlanders, have never loved the narrow strips of lowland north and south of their encircling mountains, or the seas beyond. Shah Abbas, accordingly, encouraged the advances of the East India Company. Not only was he happy to find a new market for the silks and carpets of his country, but he hoped that the fair-haired men of the sea who bought them would help him get rid of his uninvited guests the Portuguese. In 1619 the Company started its first Persian factory at Jask, southeast of Ormuz. A year later the Portuguese proceeded to attack it, but their ships were driven off by those of the English. The delighted Shah Abbas thereupon invited the English to join him in attacking Ormuz. He agreed to give them half the spoils of Ormuz and half the future customs receipts of Bender Abbas, as well as freedom from customs for themselves, stipulating that in case of success they should continue to patrol the Gulf. The English thought the game worth while, and in 1622 the Portuguese were driven out of Ormuz, Kishm, and various other posts on the Persian side of the Gulf. They lingered

for a time on the Arabian coast; but before another century had passed, Portugal disappeared from the Gulf for good.

From as long ago, then, as this alliance between Shah Abbas the Great and the East India Company dates the supremacy of the British in the Persian Gulf. It was, if you like, a case of *un diable chasse l'autre*. But we must at least admit that the second devil was called in by Shah Abbas, and that he never claimed, as did the first, a monopoly of trade in those waters. We must also remember that at that time the Turks were not a factor in the situation. They did not annex Baghdad till 1638; and for a long time afterward, the Persians disputed their claim to Mesopotamia. As a matter of fact, not until October, 1914, a day or two before the Turks went into the present war, was the Turco-Persian frontier, in accordance with a treaty signed in 1847, at last definitely drawn, by a mixed commission containing English and Russian members. And while the Turks now own Basra, they have had even less success than the Persians in asserting their authority over the Arabs of the Gulf.

In the event, the East India Company hardly found the game worth the candle. The Persians, to begin with, having achieved their main object of driving out the Portuguese, did not keep the letter of their agreement. Then the Dutch and the French East India Companies had to be reckoned with—sometimes, in the amiable fashion of the day, at the mouth of the cannon. The decline of the Safavi dynasty and the time of turmoil supervening in Persia upon the Afghan invasions early in the eighteenth century made the position of the English more and more difficult. Forced at one moment to retire from Bender Abbas, their privileges were renewed in 1763 by Kerim Shah Zend, who established them at Bushire. That has since been the headquarters of the English in the Persian Gulf.

In the meantime, the Arabs improved the opportunity to assert themselves again—chiefly in the way of piracy. Dur-

ing the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the kingdom of Oman came into being, extending its power not only to the Persian shore but as far away as Zanzibar. Once more the Persians invited the English to help drive out an inconvenient neighbor. This time the invitation was declined. The desired end was nevertheless achieved in a different way. After a long series of conflicts and negotiations with the rulers of Maskat, with the Wahabi power of central Arabia, with the Turks, and with an infinity of petty sheikhs and pirates, Great Britain recognized the Sultan of Oman and the Sheikhs of Bahrein and Koweit, and signed with the minor Arab chiefs of the littoral a series of truces which culminated in the Treaty of Perpetual Peace of 1853. By the terms of this treaty Great Britain agrees not to interfere with the Arabs on land, and they agree not to interfere with Great Britain or each other on the sea. The treaty also entails the suppression of gun-running and the slave trade, though on these points the peace cannot quite be described as perpetual. But a little *Pax Britannica* has been established in that far-away sea; and those who break it submit to the arbitration of the British Resident at Bushire, who upholds his authority not so much by the two gunboats at his disposal as by his scale of fines and subsidies and the reputation he enjoys for keeping his word.

But the position of Great Britain in the Gulf is not the whole of British interest in Persia. There is another phase, which is closely involved with Russian interest in the Central East, and, in turn, with the larger questions of the war.

Although so much nearer a neighbor of Persia than England, Russia was much later in opening relations. The first Russian embassy went to Persia in 1664. And the Grand Duke Alexis of Muscovy only succeeded in angering Shah Abbas the Second, because the embassy was discovered to be a trading expedition in disguise. Nevertheless, this doubtful diplomacy was repeated in 1715. Peter the Great despatched a third embassy at the moment of the fall of

the Safevi dynasty, complaining of aggressions on Russians in Khiva and the Caucasus—which at that time were both Persian “spheres.” Shah Mahmud, the Afghan invader, was naïve enough to confess that he had no control over either the Uzbegs or the Lesghians. Peter thereupon occupied Derbend, where the Caucasus mountains stop just short of the Caspian. And throughout the next hundred years, there followed incessant raids on one side or the other, in which the Turks took their due share. This first period of Russo-Persian relations came to an end in 1828, with the disastrous Treaty of Turkmanchāi. By virtue of this treaty, Russia formally annexed the eastern or Persian Caucasus, claimed in Persia itself the extra-territorial rights which European countries enjoyed in Turkey until 1914, and explicitly banished the Persian flag from the Caspian—of which Persia still rules nearly five hundred miles of coast.

It was towards the end of this period that Napoleon had reached the height of his power. In 1800 he proposed to Russia a joint attack on the English in India. The Persians, for their part, began to consider the advisability of regaining in the East what they had lost in the Northwest—the more so as Afghanistan has at many different times been under the Persian crown, and Persian is still the court and literary language of that country. Thus the politics of western Europe reacted in western Asia a hundred years ago, just as they do to-day. This situation brought about the first clash between England and Russia in the East. I cannot here recount the various moves and counter moves that followed. One of them was, or two of them were, further English attempts, in 1810 and 1832, to re-organize the Persian army—of which the sole though not unworthy result was the enrichment of English literature, notably by the immortal “Hajji Baba of Ispahan,” and of archaeology by Rawlinson’s deciphering of the Achaemenian cuneiform inscriptions. The final outcome was the advance of Russia into Trans-Caspia, the

retirement of Persia from Herat—after a brief and not very bloody war with England in the winter of 1856-1857—and the erection of Afghanistan into a buffer state of such solidity that even a Persian can scarcely venture into it to-day and count on coming out again, much less a Russian or an Englishman.

These events brought about a certain equilibrium in the relations of the three countries. But Persia had also become, by virtue of her geographical position, a buffer state, and one very thinly inhabited by a race far more humane than the doughty Afghans and long used to intercourse with foreigners. Moreover, the time was one of a sudden narrowing of the world by the development of steam and electricity, of a sudden expansion of commercial and colonial activity, and of a growing tension in Europe and Asia alike. If the consequences, for Persia, were not of the happiest, it is probable that she owes whatever measure of independence she still retains to the presence of the English in India. Be that as it may, this third period of Russo-Persian relations began with a revival of English commercial activity. In 1864 Great Britain obtained the right to operate telegraphs in Persia, as a part of her system of communications with India. This concession made the presence of the English in Persia the more obvious as it created the necessity of permanent English colonies throughout the country. The susceptibilities of Persians and Russians alike were more actively roused by the concession granted soon afterward to a naturalized British subject, Baron Julius de Reuter, giving him a monopoly of railways, mines, and banks in Persia. Although the concession was soon annulled, two important enterprises resulted from it. The first of these was the Imperial Bank of Persia, a British institution, established in 1889, which enjoys a monopoly of the right to issue notes, has branches in all the important cities, and in each is the centre of a small British colony. The second by-product of the Reuter concession was the

oil company whose operations are perhaps not unconnected with the campaign in Mesopotamia. After passing through a number of hands, the mining rights of the Reuter concession were finally purchased by an Australian, under the form of a monopoly of oil works in Persia for a period of sixty years from 1901. Borings were first made at Kasr-i-Shirin, near the Turkish border, on the caravan route from Kermanshah to Baghdad. The cost of transport from this point proving prohibitive, new borings were drilled in the valley of the Karun river, thirty miles east of Shuster. In 1909 the two companies which had exploited the oil concession were amalgamated as the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, and the enterprise has proved highly successful.

The navigation of the Karun, the one navigable river in Persia, which flows into the Shat-el-Arab about twenty miles below Basra, was another concession—not a monopoly—obtained by the English in 1888. Messrs. Lynch, who also operate steamers on the Tigris, opened a service on this river; and the same firm, in coöperation with the Imperial Bank of Persia, the British and Persian governments, and last but not least the Bakhtiari tribesmen, constructed a caravan trail over the mountains from the river port of Ahwaz to Isfahan, there meeting the Lynch carriage road from Tehran. This route is the shortest from the Gulf into central and northern Persia, and for through traffic should take the place of the Bushire-Shiraz or the Baghdad-Kermanshah routes. But the British government has never chosen to back it with the vigor the Russians or the Germans would have shown, and a lack of capital or enterprise has prevented the exploiters from realizing its possibilities.

The Turkish war of 1877-1878, and the advance into northern Asia, occupied much of Russia's attention during this period. But the Crimean War and the Treaty of Berlin left no tenderness in her heart towards Great Britain.

And the example of the East India Company, with Russia as with Germany, made a profound impression as to the possible results of commercial activity. While her own instincts do not lie, primarily, in the direction of commerce, Russia has accomplished miracles in the way of turning the *muzhik* into a man of business; and if her commercial activity in Persia was late in developing, she expended much zeal in blocking that of Great Britain. Incidentally, she founded in 1890 a bank of her own, as a dependency of the Russian Ministry of Finance. This Banque d'Escompte de Perse is not conducted, like the Imperial Bank of Persia, as a commercial enterprise, but it has obtained a stronger hold on the country by lending money to the great Persian land-owners and to the Persian government. As an offset to the Karun concession, furthermore, Russia obtained the exclusive right to build railways in Persia—of which she has only lately begun to avail herself by prolonging to Tebriz a branch of the trans-Caucasian railway. She also constructed excellent roads—the best in Persia, for which she now has cause to thank herself—from her own frontiers and from the Caspian to Tebriz, Meshed, and Kazvin, the last forking at Kazvin to Tehran and Hamadan. She had already borrowed another leaf from the English book in undertaking to re-organize the Persian army. What she undertook to organize, rather, and what she has continued to maintain for nearly forty years, was a body of so-called Persian Cossacks, drilled and officered by Russians. This troop is all that Persia possesses in the way of a regular army. But Russia's greatest *coup* against her rival was the secret tariff negotiated with Persia in 1902, whereby her own chief products of petroleum and sugar were reduced to one and a half per cent, while Anglo-Indian tea was raised to one hundred per cent. And English cottons, brought by way of the Gulf to Baghdad, found an increasing difficulty in making their way through the passes of the Zagros range to Kermanshah—with which difficulty,

rumor in Persia connects a certain subsidy paid to the governor of Kermanshah, who is the warden of those passes.

This commercial war on neutral territory was brought to an end, at least officially, by the famous Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907. According to the terms of this treaty, each party agreed to respect the rights already acquired by the other, but to limit future commercial and political activity to certain spheres. The Russian sphere included all Persia north of an angle drawn below Yezd, including Kasr-i-Shirin on the Turkish and Sarakhs on the Afghan frontier. The English sphere ran from Bender Abbas to Kerman, then up to Birjand, and thence due east to Afghanistan. The interval between the two was designated as neutral, and open to the activities of both countries.

This agreement pleased no one but Russia, who thereby earmarked for herself the best part of Persia. English public opinion was intensely dissatisfied to find the greater part of the Gulf and the entire valley of the Karun River left outside the British sphere. As for the Persians, who were already in the throes of their recent revolutionary movement, they were filled with consternation at what they certainly did not lack reason to consider a cool partition of their country. Be that as it may, the subsequent course of Russia, in particular, has done very little to reassure them. The events of the last few years are still too fresh in our minds to need recapitulation—interesting as it would be to recall the fantastic story of our own unofficial part in them. The hero of this story, Mr. W. M. Shuster, went to Tehran in May, 1912, at the request of the Persian government, as treasurer-general, and left the following January in consequence of a Russian ultimatum. Whatever his general qualifications may have been, Mr. Shuster's own account of his brief mission proves him to have lacked the particular diplomatic talents by which alone he could have retained his difficult post. But he succeeded in a remark-

ably short time in making some sort of order out of the chaos of Persian finance; and there are still many in Persia, not all of them Persians, who remember him with gratitude and respect. Although he himself disappeared, his work in part remains. An unexpected instance has been the rôle played in the events of the past year by the force of Treasury gendarmes which he created. But Russian troops had already entered Tebriz to quiet the disturbances of the revolution. Simultaneously with the ultimatum of 1912, new forces were despatched by the Tsar to Kazvin and Meshed, and they had not yet been withdrawn at the outbreak of the present war.

So much, for the moment, for one side of the war between the Persian Gulf and the Baghdad railway. The history of the other side is both more recent and more familiar, and therefore may be reviewed more briefly. Spheres of influence, as we know, are not an institution peculiar to Persia. The whole Turkish Empire, in fact, is now a German sphere of influence. This of course has not always been the case. The Russians, for instance, have long regarded northern Asia Minor with only less interest than northern Persia, and have taken pains to acquire as good a frontier on the Black Sea as on the Caspian. In the South, the French began their acquaintance with Syria as long ago as the time of the Crusades. Napoleon also extended his operations into that region in 1799, in pursuance of his unrealized plan of attacking the British in India. And in our own time, French companies have built railways from Beïrut, Haïfa, and Jaffa, to Damascus, Homs, and Jerusalem. Then for the English, who, as we have seen, were established in the Persian Gulf before the Turks appeared at the head of it, Mesopotamia has long been a natural field of activity. In the days when England still backed Turkey against a hostile world, Messrs. Lynch were permitted to run, under many restrictions, a couple of steamers on the Tigris. And this sphere of influence gained a new importance by the piercing

of the Isthmus of Suez and the eventual establishment of Great Britain as warden of that newest road to the East. But her activities were not confined to the South. For Englishmen laid the first railways in Asia Minor—from Constantinople to Nicomedia and from Smyrna to Aïdin.

The chapter of foreign interests in Turkey is far too long to open here—though it might perhaps be to the point to name the Austrian railway connecting Constantinople with the West. It is enough to say that the English and the French were chiefly concerned in them. But in 1889 a new competitor entered the field. In that year, the young Emperor William the Second treated Europe to one of the first of many surprises by paying the unpopular Sultan Abd-ül-Hamid the unprecedented compliment of a visit. No other European monarch had ever done such a thing; and while the Turks did not quite know what to make of it, and were privately amused at the characteristic presents brought by the imperial visitor, they were, after all, very naturally pleased. Shortly afterward, it appeared that the railway first built by the English from Constantinople to Nicomedia was to be taken over by a German company, and that this German company was to prolong the line to Angora—which was promptly done. The Germans then obtained a concession to build a branch of their new railway from Eski Shehir to Konia, thus blocking any extension of the English Smyrna-Aïdin line. This branch was completed in 1897. The following year, the Emperor paid a second visit to his great and good friend Abd-ül-Hamid, and a still more unprecedented one; for his first visit had never been returned. This time the Kaiser went also to Palestine, where, to the no small irritation of France, he proclaimed himself the special protector of Christendom in that part of the world, and incidentally warmed the Moslem heart by his tribute to Saladin.

At this the Russians thought it time to bestir themselves, lest some inconvenient line crop up along the old caravan

route from Trebizond to Erzurum and Tebriz to compete with their own trans-Caucasian road. In 1900 they signed a convention with the Turks, reserving to themselves the right to construct railways in northern Asia Minor. In the meantime, the prolongation of the German road to Baghdad began to be mooted. That convention was signed in 1903, and the next year the Konia branch advanced two hundred kilometres, carrying the railhead to the foothills of the formidable Taurus range. There it stopped. For while the convention gave Germany a comfortable kilometric guarantee, exceeding any possible profit from the road for many years, the capital for so considerable an undertaking was not readily forthcoming. For this reason, and in order to sweeten the sop to England, Germany offered to admit the latter to a share in the enterprise. But England saw no reason to take up half the shares when she would have only two voices on a directors' board of eleven. She also objected to the clause of the convention that gave Germany the right, during the laying of the section from Baghdad to Basra, to navigate the Tigris. Nor could she be delighted by the fact that Koweit, that ticklish Arab stateling at the head of the Gulf, was named as the terminus of the line, that the *Pax Britannica* she had been so long concocting ran the danger of being spoiled by too many cooks, and that Turkey and Germany threatened to put a solid foot in the crack of one of her doors to India. Thus did the question between Baghdad and the Gulf begin to draw to a head.

However, for one reason and another, the road continued to stick on the upper side of the Taurus. Then the Turkish revolution caused a sudden coolness towards Germany, and for a moment England had it in her power to regain the upper hand. But the new ambassador changed the extravagant friendliness of the Young Turks into enmity by his characteristically British refusal to open private relations with them before presenting his credentials to the Sultan. Whereas the astute German ambassador quickly found

means to ingratiate himself with the new régime, in spite of having been hand in glove with the old. Four more sections of the Baghdad railway were provided for, and work was begun on the Mesopotamian side of the Taurus. In Baghdad, too, the Germans encouraged the Young Turks to upset an arrangement of amalgamating the Lynch company with the rival Turkish company, which would have been a good thing for the navigation of the Tigris but which also would have been a good thing for British trade.

When speaking of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, I did not say that mass meetings, both in Tehran and Constantinople, sent telegrams of protest to the German Emperor, as the special friend and protector of Islam. And I purposely postponed mentioning the Potsdam Agreement of 1910, whereby Germany made her official appearance on the Persian scene. By this agreement, Germany and Russia each recognized the other's sphere of influence in the neighboring Mohammedan empires; each agreed to follow therein with respect to the other the policy of the open door; and both arranged for an extension of the Baghdad railway into north Persia—the Persian section to be under Russian management but Germany to share in the cost and the receipts, or to construct it herself if Russia did not do so within five years. This agreement was the logical outcome of the Baghdad railway and the obvious next step in the Teutonic *Drang nach Osten*. It also took a clever advantage of that famous neutral zone which Russia and England had so carefully left between their own spheres. By the agreement, Germany made her entrance into Persia under Russia's wing, but on the very southernmost edge of Russia's sphere. Who could object, then, if her activities extended into the neutral zone? But for England the agreement looked rather like a betrayal by her partner in Persia. It looked very much more like a flank attack on the Gulf, and the planting of another unfriendly foot in the crack of another door to India. However, England merely took up again a project which

she had long vaguely considered and which the Russians had always discouraged, of a railway from the Karun to Khorremabad, on the edge of the Russian sphere, not far from where the projected German road would climb the passes from Mesopotamia. Negotiations had been completed with the semi-independent tribesmen of this region, and surveys had been started, when the present war broke out.

In the meantime the Tripolitan and Balkan wars kept everyone busy except the contractors of the Baghdad railway. At the close of the Balkan War, the Turks undertook a series of negotiations with England, France, Germany, and Russia, with a view to adjusting their differences and developing the resources of the empire. These had virtually reached a successful conclusion when the present war broke out. Then England, France, and Russia, of course, automatically disappeared from the scene, leaving Germany the heir to their concessions and the dominant power in Turkey. By this time the tunnels of the Taurus were well under way, and a section of the epoch-making railway had been opened north of Baghdad. And another section had been arranged for to Khanikin, at the foot of the Persian passes.

Such, in brief, are the questions in Persia and Turkey whose clash has contributed so much to the causes of the war. I have said that in the Asiatic theatre the war is chiefly between the Baghdad railway and the Persian Gulf. For the Russians, it is rather a war of the Black Sea and the Dardanelles. And for the Turks, so far as their own will is concerned in the matter, it is a war of independence. But the real battles of this multiple war have hitherto been fought in Europe. I therefore need not enlarge on the scattered and desultory Asiatic campaign. We are all sufficiently familiar with the unsuccessful Turkish attempts to invade Egypt and the Caucasus, with the more resounding failure of the English and French to penetrate the Dardanelles,

with the small British expedition up the Tigris—which, after reaching Ctesiphon, almost in sight of Baghdad, was forced to retreat to Kut-el-Amara—and with the revival of activity in northern Asia Minor, where the Russians have taken Ezrum. The transfer of the Grand Duke Nicholas to this front, albeit in disgrace, and the release of a considerable army from the Dardanelles, hint of more important developments in the near future. A new expedition to Suez may also be looked for—unless the English send such large reinforcements to Mesopotamia as to require more serious attention. No one need be surprised to hear that the tunnels of the Taurus have been completed very much sooner than was expected, and that the various unfinished sections of the Baghdad railway have been linked up. That would immensely simplify for the Turks their problem of transport, and would make the position of the English on the lower Tigris very much more precarious.

What in this part of the world we are less familiar with is the situation in Persia. While nominally neutral, Persia virtually became a battle-ground even before Turkey went into the war. The English and the Russians at once closed their toll-roads to Austrians and Germans, and the Russians strengthened their garrisons in the North. Germans and Turks, for their part, promptly set about stirring up the Persians, by promising them deliverance from the yoke of the foreigner. And the first move of the Turks after declaring war was to enter the Persian province of Azerbaijan, where a Turkish dialect is spoken, in the hope of gaining recruits for an excursion into the Caucasus.

There is no doubt that Persian sympathies lean rather to the side of Baghdad than to that of the Gulf. The Persians do not love the Turks more, but they love the Russians less; and of the Germans they know only the glittering legend of the Kaiser, whom the bazaar reports to be the bitter enemy of Christendom and the tender friend of Islam. There is, however, no such thing as a Persian army. There are the Cossacks, who are under the control of their Russian officers,

and there are Mr. Shuster's gendarmes. The latter were officered by Swedes until the outbreak of the war, when most of the officers returned to their country. The German propaganda, accordingly, found a ready success with the men. Indeed, one young Swede openly went over to the Germans, with his command. The consequence, for the English, French, and Russians in central Persia, was a small reign of terror. And for a moment Baghdad even threatened Tehran. But the Russians, having reinforced Tehran, proceeded to march upon Kermanshah, clearing the roads as they went. Of their actual capture of the town, we have just heard, and they now hold all the main highways into Persia. But to descend from Kermanshah through the steep defiles of the Zagros to Mesopotamia, will not be a simple matter, for we learn that the Turco-German propaganda has enlisted the Kurd and the Lur tribesmen of the region, who are first-rate military material—in the rough. We must remember, however, that they totally lack equipment, discipline, or organization, and without very extensive support could not oppose a modern army. If the Russians have been able to spare a large enough force for this expedition, their appearance at Khani-kin, only ninety miles from Baghdad, would be of great importance in the Mesopotamian campaign. In any case, they enjoy a great advantage in holding the Black Sea and Azerbaijan, on both flanks of Asia Minor, and in possessing a road suitable for motor transport, such as does not exist on the west side of Kurdistan, from the Caspian to Hamadan.

Of the final outcome, and whether it will be decided on this ancient battle-ground or far away in Europe, it is not yet profitable to speak. Still, one's mind cannot help playing with alternatives. If the Dardanelles and the Baghdad railway were to win against the Black Sea and the Persian Gulf, what would happen? Or if the Gulf and the Black Sea were to beat Baghdad and the Dardanelles, what then? There too, to be sure, prophecy is but a trap for confusion. Yet, again, one can at least imagine possibilities.

A Turco-German triumph, for instance, would restore to

Turkey a good deal of the prestige and territory she has latterly lost. At the outset of the war she made no secret of her ambition to break into the Caucasus. She would probably take back Kars and Batum. She might demand Poti, even Tiflis and Baku—with the formidable wall of the main Caucasian range between her and her old enemy of the North. Then in the South she would doubtless regain her old position in Egypt. She would thus hold the keys of Gallipoli, Suez, and the Gulf, as well as those of the two southern land routes into Persia and the East, which would make her again a power to be reckoned with. And not only would her western allies help her to put her house in better order than ever before, but she would doubtless acquire great influence with her Mohammedan neighbors in Asia and Africa. Those western allies, of course, would in all this be greatly the gainers—so greatly that it would require much space even to sketch the possible changes in the balance of the world. And Turkey might find, in the end, that her war of independence had achieved only her own complete slavery. But who knows? It might be, so strangely does the event sometimes outstrip the anticipation, that the Germans would not gain so much as we take it for granted they expect; that they might be content with having broken the power of their old rivals in the East, and would count it enough to reap the laurels of a liberator.

An Anglo-Russian victory, on the other hand, would definitely take away from the Turks their last pretension to rank as a first-class power. They might lose Constantinople. They certainly would lose their right to close the straits. They might suffer humiliations more profound. For Turkey is an empire only partly of Turks, and they broke their way into it by force. Moreover, their recent course has unchained the bitterest resentments, within and without. If Russia saw fit to reconstitute Armenia, if England and France permitted the Arabs to separate for good from their fallen suzerain, could it be occasion for surprise? But it would

not destroy the real Turkish people; and the real Turkish people, relieved of responsibilities undertaken before they were fit, might at last be the better able to work out their own salvation.

The wider reactions of an Anglo-Russian victory would presumably entail less change in the world we have known than the contrary result. There might merely be an end of the Teutonic *Drang nach Osten* and a long putting off of the hopes of Africa and Asia. But this greatest of wars, with its terrific re-testing of values, has begun, dimly enough, to pose anew many a question that we had thought answered. It may not be too fantastic to imagine, for instance, that the effect of the war upon Russia, even upon a victorious Russia, might be very unexpected. There is a power in Russia which has as yet never had a voice in public affairs. It is hard to believe that this power will remain forever dumb, that after this tremendous conflict in which it has shared it will be content to remain dumb. And when it speaks, I cannot believe that Russia will continue the calculated widening of her frontiers, without scruple for the rights of those who are weaker than she. So Persia may, after all, be destined to regain her independence.

And England? For her, chief among the questions raised is that of India, which looms in the background of the whole war. If an empire of accident, and a policy of live-and-let-live—such as the *Pax Britannica* of the Persian Gulf—come to appear an empire of conquest and a policy of the closed door, and so set the world on fire, it is time to consider whether the world in council might devise some fair way of preserving India from attack and of keeping open the roads thereto, other than England's way. England was great enough to face a fact and to abandon Gallipoli. With Germany humbled and Russia at last responsive to her inward voice, England might well be great enough to abandon that vaster Gallipoli of the Indian seas.

TWO POETS

(Alice Freeman Palmer and Rupert Brooke)

By THOMAS D. GOODELL

Two poets I read together, and in my heart
Their fragrance blended as two roses blend,
A white and red—as flute and hautboy mend
The passion of the strings to a finer art,
Till old-new dreams of living and dying start,
And dimly we begin to apprehend
Their mingled meanings, and we dare to send
Thought on—to where their ways draw not apart.
Two poet souls, of woman and of man;
The one late learning of her poet's dower;
In him youth's heady and sweet wine was rife.
Ah happy they, and blest their mortal span,
Finding in love's surrender a new power,
In war's last sacrifice a new-won life.

GERVAIS

(Killed at the Dardanelles)

By MARGARET ADELAIDE WILSON

Bees hummed and rooks called hoarsely outside the quiet
room

Where by an open window Gervais, the restless boy,
Fretting the while for cricket, read of Patroclos' doom
And flower of youth a-dying by far-off windy Troy.

Do the old tales, half-remembered, come back to haunt him
now

Who leaving his glad school days and putting boyhood by
Joined England's bitter Iliad? Greek beauty on the brow
That frowns with dying wonder up to Hissarlik's sky!